

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 20020 231330Z
ACTION INR-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 20020

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, PGOV, IC, FR
SUBJECT: FRANCOIS DESBANS, NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO
ICELAND

1. FRANCOIS DESBANS, FORMER FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO ALBANIA,
HAS BEEN NAMED AMBASSADOR TO ICELAND. HE REPLACES
JACQUES PRADELLES DE LATOUR DEJEAN, WHO HAS HELD THIS
POSITION SINCE 1973.

2. DESBANS, BORN SEPTEMBER 23, 1919, STUDIED HISTORY
AND LAW, AND RECEIVED ADVANCED DEGREES IN CIVIL LAW,
ROMAN LAW, THE HISTORY OF LAW. HE SERVED IN THE MILITARY
BETWEEN 1940-1945. UPON GRADUATION FROM THE NATIONAL
SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION (1954-56), HE ENTERED THE
FOREIGN SERVICE AND SERVED FOUR YEARS AT THE QUAI D'OR-
SAY (1956-60) IN MOROCCAN AND TUNISIAN AFFAIRS. HE
MOVED TO ECONOMIC AFFAIRS FROM 1960-61; SERVED OVERSEAS
AS SECOND COUNSELOR IN SAIGON (1961-64); AND SUBSEQUEN-
TLY IN THE SECRETARIAT OF THE PRESIDENCY UNDER DE GAULLE
(MAY 1964-JULY 1967). HE WAS MADE KNIGHT OF THE LEGION
OF HONOR ON JULY 12, 1966. HE WAS SECOND COUNSELOR IN
WASHINGTON (1967-71) AND THEN MOSCOW (1971-74) WHERE HE
WAS CHARGED WITH, AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS, FOLLOWING THE
ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. HE WAS MADE AN OFFICER OF THE NA-
TIONAL ORDER OF MERIT ON MAY 12, 1971 AND APPOINTED
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AMBASSADOR TO ALBANIA IN DECEMBER 1974, A POST WHICH HE
HELD UNTIL 1977.

2. PERSONAL COMMENTS BY AMERICAN OFFICIALS WHO HAVE
KNOWN DESBANS ARE MIXED BUT THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT
THAT HE IS PROFESSIONALLY CORRECT BUT THAT BOTH HE AND
HIS WIFE TEND TO BE COOL IN THEIR PERSONAL RELA-

TIONS. DESBANS IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER FRANCOISE
FARBOS DE EUZAN. HE SPEAKS ADEQUATE ENGLISH; HIS WIFE
SOMEWHAT LESS. THEY HAVE FOUR CHILDREN. IN 1962,
DESBANS COLLABORATED ON A BOOK ENTITLED "FOREIGN AF-
FAIRS."
HARTMAN

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